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**PALMA'S BEACH COMPLETE
TRANSFORMATION
(*ARCHITECTURAL, URBANISTIC AND
TOURISTIC*)**

FELIO JOSÉ BAUZÁ MARTORELL

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I.-DESCRIPTION.

Palma's Beach –also called *El Arenal*- is a piece of coast of the south of the island of Mallorca, part in the city of Palma, part in Lluçmajor. It is next to the international airport of Son San Juan, at a few minutes by car of the old town of the capital.

Untill the decade on 1960's, Palma's Beach was free of buildings. Land owners considered a bunch of sand with no value at all.

But in that period tourism in Majorca –and the rest of Spain- came through. Tourists discovered those virginal islands in the Mediterranean see. So in that area the most important hotel chains (Sol, Melia, Iberostar, Barceló) were born.

Very far from a urbanistic design, an environmental sensibility, a transportation planning... many hotels, buildings, discos... grew continuously until current situation.

The result of all that is a mature destination and a degraded area with a residential population of over 34.000 people and a hotel capacity of over 4.000 beds, wich accomodates more tan 1'6 million visitors per year.

II.- NEED OF A READJUSTMENT.

Nowadays, the virginal landscape of *El Arenal* has completely disappeared. Urban pressure, massive tourism, Young people destination... make of Palma's beach a degraded area.

As a result, Palma's Beach in last years lost its reputation: alcohol and night partying; criminal rates growth (basically robberies); hotel owners investment in other areas, more selected; withstanding capacity exceeded,... all these, threaten the future of the area, and probably the rest of Majorca as a touristic destination.

This degradation becomes a vicious circle: as visitors are mainly Young people, families and senior tourists avoid Palma's Beach, as local residents as well. So far as streets are plenty of discos and music cafeterías, flats and apartments are bound to be degraded and to lodge only waiters and hotel workers, but not full time residents.

So, in any case, it is clear that Palma's Beach needs an urgent transformation and revaluation if it wants to compete with other destinations in the Mediterranean Sea.

III.- A GLOBAL ACTION NEEDS EVERY ADMINISTRATION'S CONCERN.

Spanish administrative organisation is based on a distribution of competences between the Central Government, the regional one, the government of the provinces/islands, and the municipalities.

The Project of Palma's Beach revaluation is not possible if every administration level is not involved.

Leadered by a consortium, Palma's Beach Project is participated (not only institutionally, but also with funds and budget) by the Ministry of Tourism (Government of Spain), the Regional Government of the Balearic Islands (the one which has the main competences on tourism), the Government of Majorca, and the City Councils of Palma and Lluçmajor (in Spain urbanism is a competence of the municipalities).

The job of this consortium has the support of the autonomic Law 8/2010, of July 27th. This policy tries to change the present model of production and consumption of territory, energy, edification, mobility and urban transportation, and the reduction of the climate change. That's the reason why the action to achieve its target has to follow a widespread field.

IV.- GLOBAL ACTION AND FIELDS TO WORK FROM.

As we are saying, a complete transformation of an area –in this case, Palma's Beach– needs a global action to work from several points of view. The different fields from the different institutions are working on are as follows:

1.- Urbanism.

Palma's Beach is based on a coast front with an homogeneous urban net with no diversification, no environment sensibility, low constructive quality, where is very difficult to insert public equipments.

Form an urban point of view the objective is to offer a polycentric Palma's Beach, where it could be able to live different experiences, in restored spaces, connected among them and abroad, with effective transportation. It is necessary to substitute obsolete activities and to create strategic spaces which can contribute to reevaluate the area, and finally to redesign a new street net with a new model of public space and transportation.

- *Urban strategy is aimed to achieve the following objectives:*
- *A new urban design with an added value and no urban increase.*
- *Reinventing urban space and landscape according to a Mediterranean model.*
- *Diversifying urban identities and experiences.*
- *Creating areas that can contribute to increase urban value.*
- *Adapting urban design to weather change.*
- *Re-qualification of the hotel facilities. A bulking of certain obsolete establishments will take place, as well as a modernization of the existing buildings.*
- *Beautifying the urban environment, removing "colonizing" effects.*

2.- Tourism.

Due to its capacity to lodge many people in the coast at reasonable prices, Palma's Beach has been since a couple of years a successfully destination; but nowadays, competitive loss and a change in the demand make it to face an immediate period of decadence.

That's the reason why it's important to define a new model of destination, in order to achieve a new position as a referent in tomorrow's touristic market. So it's necessary to design an innovated touristic project that takes into account the rehabilitation of touristic space and facilities.

As well it's important to identify the desirable/possible touristic demand, to foster the "mediterraneaty", implement new touristic products, and to bring about a new kind of job with better value, quality and incomes.

- Touristic strategy is aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- Innovated touristic project.

- Space and touristic facilities improve.

- A new target.

- A new value offer.

- Human resources.

- Having a hotel offer with half the current capacity but of higher quality, as it is planned that most of the establishments will have between 4 and 5 stars.

- Support to complementary tourist services companies.

- Brightening the existing leisure supply and adapting it to the new visitors' demands.

3.- Environment.

Sustainability is a key item for Palma's Beach success in future. Again and again tourism is demanding environment respectful destinations. And to achieve a sustainable development it's necessary to integrate natural resources conservation, environment integrity, economic viability and social aspects.

Environment strategy is aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- *Reducing energy consumption and fumes emission.*
- *Improving the water distribution, reducing its consumption, and guaranteeing its quality.*
- *Reducing wasting materials and improving its recollection.*
- *Reducing noises, both local and the ones from the airport.*
- *Reducing environment impact of new buildings and facilities.*
- *Reducing traffic and improving mobility with wide avenues and parking areas.*
- *Preserving biodiversity and recovering coastal ecosystems.*
- *Anticipate the regulations against climate change and CO2 emissions.*
- *Using resources according to sustainability and rationality.*

4.- Society.

Current situation in Palma's Beach is damaging population's life quality and cultural identity, contributing to create a social polarization, low quality housing, poor workers' knowledge and qualification, a very seasonable labour market and public security problems.

Improving residents and workers' way of life in Palma's Beach is a key item of the new model that has to be developed.

Social strategy is aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- *Strengthening social and cultural cohesion of neighbours and visitors.*
- *Renovating productive industry.*
- *Improving internal and external mobility with public transport and facilitating the circulation of non-pollutant means.*
- *Recovering the beach, seawaters and the environment biota.*
- *Improvement of the employment in order to remove working seasonality, with better qualified work all year long.*
- *Improving the residential life conditions in homes, equipments and services.*

5.- Technology.

Information and communication technologies are crucial to face Palma's Beach future with competitiveness in Spanish touristic sector and to make citizens' life easier.

Information's Society opportunities can reevaluate Palma's Beach and make it an "Advanced Digital Space".

Technological strategy is aimed to achieve the following objectives:

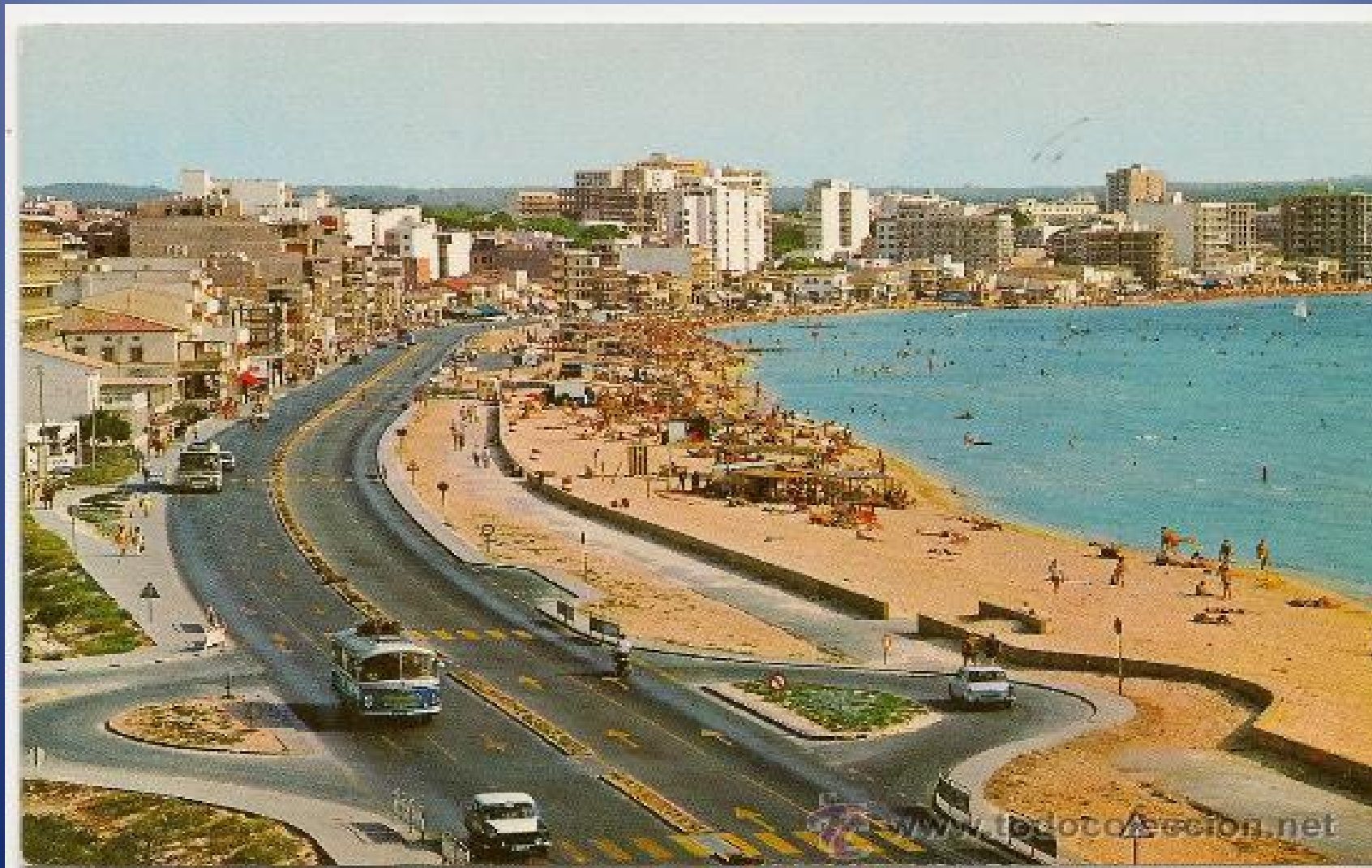
- *Simplifying touristic industry.*
- *Delivering activities and offer among tourists.*
- *Simplifying administrative and bureaucratic proceedings.*

6.- Pictures.





Playa de Palma de Mallorca en 1969









V.- CONCLUSIONS. DESIGN OF THE NEW PALMA'S BEACH.

The design and correct development of the new Palma's Beach must be based on the application of an innovative and comprehensive policy: urbanistic, touristic, architectural, environmental, social and technological.

The project tries to combine new technological and architectural advances with traditional Majorcan elements. All this, working with the aim of achieving a durable and sophisticated project.

Following these premises, a high quality public space will be created, respecting the Mediterranean urban culture and searching a synthesis between tourism and the local context. An increasing rapprochement will take place and the tourists and residents will rediscover the interior of the area and its agricultural background, and they will experience the hospitable character of our community.

Despite these rules, the project constitutes a great challenge of huge economic, social and environmental value, that covers economic activity and employment, the improvement of the urban, tourist, residential and social environment, the adaptation of global change and the slowdown of the climate change.